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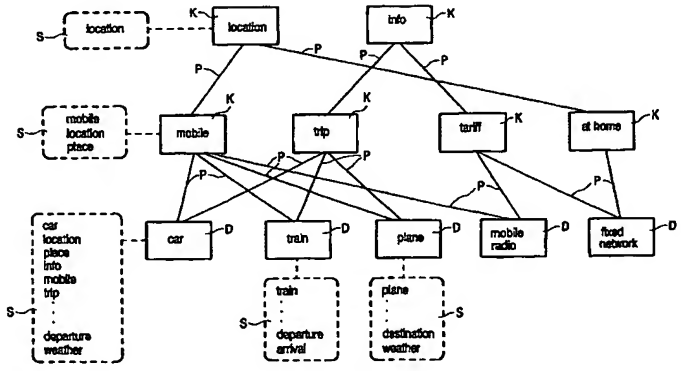
(54) Title: METHOD OF OPERATING A SPEECH DIALOGUE SYSTEM



(57) Abstract: A method of operating a speech dialogue system (1) is described. For controlling the dialogue for selecting one of various services (9, 10) of the dialogue system (1) by the user, a database (6) is used which has a hierarchical data structure (DS) with a plurality of nodes (K) and a plurality of paths (P) for interconnection of the nodes (K) and for connecting the nodes (K) to service objects (D) which are arranged at a respective end of the path (P). The service objects (D) represent the services available (9, 10). The nodes (K) represent respective categories in which further categories and/or the services classified thereunder are arranged. At least to part of these service objects (D) and/or nodes (K) leads a plurality of paths (P). To each node (K) and each service object (D) is furthermore assigned at least one keyword (S). Search words are extracted from a spoken entry of the user and on the basis of the search words a number of candidate nodes (K) and/or candidate service objects (D) is sought, whose assigned keywords (S) match the search words in accordance with a predefined acceptance criterion. The search method is executed in various search steps until the number of candidate nodes (K) and/or candidate service objects (D) is situated above a predefined minimum number and below a predefined maximum number. Then a speech output menu is generated and the categories represented by the candidate nodes (K) and/or candidate service objects (D) found and/or services (9, 10) are announced. In addition, a respective speech dialogue system (1) is described.

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